

Not celebrating Nevada Day is just being a 'Rebel'

By Willie Puchert
Contributing Features Writer

While most UNLV students and Southern Nevadans will spend Thursday relaxing or trick or treating for Halloween, few may realize that Nevada Day, the birthday of our state, is the reason for the four-day weekend.

Nevada became a territory around the same time the Civil War began in 1861. Then-President Abraham Lincoln wanted Nevada's statehood for political reasons. Aside from being admitted as a free slave state, it provided a three electoral vote advantage over presidential challenger George McClellan in the 1864 election. Since McClellan was more sympathetic to the South, the election was thought to be a Union referendum on the Civil War.

Lincoln also saw the mineral wealthy "Silver State," as its moniker suggests, as a monetary resource to support of the war effort.

The deadline for the state's admittance was Oct. 31 of that year.

According to Robert Davenport, UNLV associate history professor, Nevada nearly missed that deadline. Before statehood could be approved, the state had to submit a copy of its constitution. The document, which had been temporarily misplaced, had to be sent via telegram—taking half a day to be wired. "A file clerk had put (the constitution) under 'Nebraska,'" Davenport said.

Nevada was finally admitted as the 36th state

into the Union. Davenport said the holiday has more significance in Northern Nevada, where much of the state's early history was made. He attributes this to the absence of local commemoration in Southern Nevada, which is mainly comprised of out-of-state residents.

In the state capital, Carson City, residents celebrate the holiday with an annual parade. But in Southern Nevada cities, including Las Vegas, many are unaware of the importance of the holiday.

This can be attributed to the fact that the Las Vegas area is geographically isolated from the rest of the state. In fact, this area was technically Arizona territory until 1967, when Congress passed a law officially stating that all land south of the 37th parallel was part of Nevada.

This geographic isolation has also become ingrained in UNLV's identity. Prior to 1968, this campus was known as the Southern Regional Division of the University of Nevada and Nevada Southern University.

Tensions arose with the growth sprawl, coupled with the fact that the school offered a limited amount of degrees and most of the administrative decisions were made in Northern Nevada.

This North-South conflict helped to develop



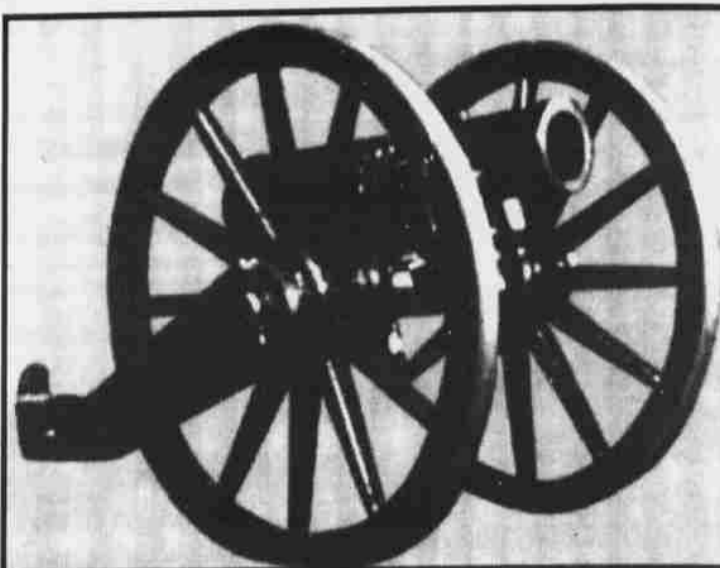
the school's "Rebel" identity, particularly in its athletic programs. The nickname "Rebels" was given to UNLV because the school, emerging from the shadow of UNR, in effect rebelled against its bigger and older brother to the north.

The original mascot was 'Beauregard the Wolf,' dressed in a scarlet and gray Confederate uniform. "UNLV was rebelling against the status quo and the two school's mascot seemed to mimic the Civil War," former UNLV president Don Baepler said. "Reno had a northern-looking wolf so we wanted a Confederate wolf."

The logo lasted until the mid-1970s when objections from African-American students were made because of the Confederacy's support of slavery. Shortly thereafter a colonial minuteman-like Rebel soldier emerged as the school's official mascot until the early 1980s in its present incarnation as the mustached cartoon Rebel known as "Hey Reb."

The Fremont Cannon became the trophy as a symbolic gesture for state rivalry football game. Twenty-five years ago, Bill Ireland, the Rebels' first football coach, began the tradition of rewarding the victor a replica of a howitzer used by trailblazer John C. Fremont. According to legend, Fremont took the cannon with him without permission from the U.S. War Department on a westward journey in 1843.

The replica cannon, built by the



The Fremont Cannon

Photo: Courtesy of UNLV SI



"Hey Reb"

Kennecott Copper Corp. of the Nevada Mines Division, is worth more than \$10,000. The Wolf Pack maintains a 12-10 over the Rebels since the first game of the series on Thanksgiving Day in 1969.

Both the game and the Carson City parade are said to be a campaign stomping ground for Nevada politicians. One thing that Nevada sports and politics will have in common next year is the hope that "the South shall rise again."

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—Don Baepler, former UNLV president

Seal symbolizes features, Union loyalty



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"The Great Seal of the State of Nevada" displays Union loyalty and the features of Nevada's landscape.

The design of the seal was first adopted on Nov. 29, 1861 shortly after Nevada became a territory. It originally included the Latin motto "Volens et Potens" or "Willing and Able," which expressed pro-Union ideals both politically and financially.

The current design was adopted during the Nevada Constitutional Convention held in the summer of 1864. At the base of two large mountains stands a quartz mill and a tunnel, reflecting the mining interests of the state. A plow, sheaf and sickle, located in the foreground, rep-

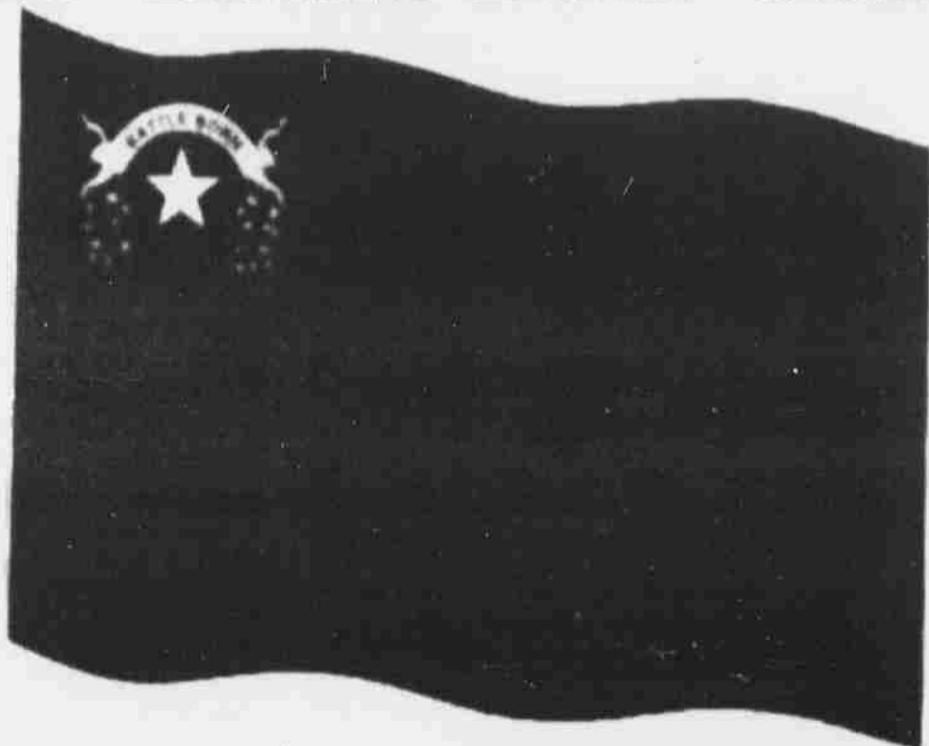
resents the agricultural resources of the state.

A train passing through a mountain gorge, telegraph line and snow-capped mountains with a rising sun are displayed in the middle, representing the state's landscape.

Thirty-six stars encircle the seal symbolizing Nevada as the 36th state to enter the Union. On the outer portion of the circle the words "The Great Seal of the State of Nevada" are engraved along with six other stars.

In 1866, The Nevada Legislature changed the motto of the seal on the inward lower portion to "All for Our Country." One hundred three years later, the measure was amended to make the legal description conform to the actual features of the seal.

Nevada flag reflects the 'Battle Born' state



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Don't be fooled by the simplicity of Nevada's flag. It symbolizes several historical aspects of the state.

The present flag has had three predecessors and was originally designed by Nevada Governor John Sparks and his staff member, Harry Day, in 1905. The prototype was blue with 36 stars and had the words "gold," "Nevada" and "silver," reflecting that Nevada was

the 36th state to be admitted into the Union, as well as the mining interests of the state.

Ten years later the Nevada Legislature replaced the design with the state seal in the center to blue background. The new design, by Clara Crisler, included 18 gold stars arranged around the word "Nevada" and 18 silver stars below the phrase "All For Our Country." The flag also contained a lone larger star.

A third version, adopted by Louis Shellback, III in 1929

changed the flag to include two sprays of sagebrush (reflecting the state flower) crossed in the upper left-hand corner with a five-pointed star in the middle of the wreath. The word "Nevada" was spelled out between the points. A scroll with the motto: "Battle Born" reflected the Civil War origin of the state.

The present day model, designed by Verne R. Horton, was modified in the 1991 Legislative session to move the word "Nevada" beneath the star.